

JOCHELSON, THE KORYAK.

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living apart. In connection with the separation of brothers, the custom of minority succession has become established. The mother, the aged father, and the unmarried sisters, remain with the younger brother, who also retains the house, all family protectors and amulets, and the boat. The reindeer of the remaining members of the family are under his general supervision. 177
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VENDETTA. — Blood-revenge does not seem to occur at present. This is one of the late results of Russian influence, for the archives record cases of blood-vengeance reported by district officials to the Province Administration up to very recent times. The disappearance of this custom, however, must be ascribed solely to the cultural influence of Russian manners, and not to the stringency of the Russian laws. 628
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The Administration is powerless to enforce respect for the Russian laws in the desolate tundras. In distant localities beyond the easy reach of Russian settlers, murders in the name of revenge for blood or insult probably still continue to occur.

With the Koryak, as with all primitive peoples, the practice of taking blood-revenge has arisen as a re-action to lawless violence. Within certain limits this object has been attained; but no sooner did one murder occurred than it would be followed by an entire series of other murders, and the feud between two family groups would not infrequently be kept alive through several generations.

The duty of avenging the murder of a relative fell upon the male members of the consanguineous group. According to the accounts of the Koryak, the immediate avengers were the brothers; then followed cousins, nephews, and the more remote relatives on the father's or mother's side. In case there were no brothers, the father or uncle, unless impeded by age, would take their place. On the whole, however, vengeance for blood was considered by the Koryak to be the duty of all blood-relatives, and not of single individuals. A consanguineous group consisting of one or several families was also jointly responsible for a murder committed by one of its members, and in so far must be regarded as one juridical personality. We know that the old men often attempted to check the spread of blood-revenge. For this purpose, ransom was resorted to. The Reindeer people would give reindeer to the family of the victim; while the ransom of the Maritime people would consist of skins, embroidered clothes, arms, and other articles.

In one of his reports to the Governor in 1885, the chief of the Gishiga district refers to one case of murder committed at a fair on the Palpal. The relatives of the murderer entered into negotiations with the relatives of the victim in regard to a ransom; but when the latter proved too exacting, the former cut short the negotiations, hurriedly broke camp under cover of night, and, accompanied by distant relatives, migrated northward, leaving the family of the victim free to act in accordance with custom. It is further

628 stated in the report, that on the following day the family of the victim
177 started out in pursuit of the offenders. Here the report of the case ends.

In blood-revenge the Koryak did not insist on the punishment of the culprit himself. Any one or a number of his relatives might fall in his stead, blood for blood being the only principle followed. The interpretation of the usage of revenge is corroborated by the circumstances under which reconciliation is occasionally effected between the family of the culprit and that of the victim. The family of the former cedes to the family of the latter a young man as a son-in-law, or a girl as a daughter-in-law. The essential element in this method of reconciliation is obviously, not the ceding of a member of the family in compensation for the murderer's victim, but the fact that through these marriages ties of affinity are established between the hostile families, in consequence of which the blood-revenge lapses, for no compensation is required for the murder of a relative. Murder within the family is the shedding of one's own blood; vengeance here would mean perpetual bloodshed. I was told that in the past, murders of vicious, cruel, or tiresome people remained unpunished. Even when strangers would kill a member of the group whose conduct was anti-social or otherwise objectionable, relatives would not seek compensation for him.

Cases have occurred where relatives of the murderer, in order to escape vengeance, have abandoned him to his fate at the hands of the avenger. On the Taigonos Peninsula I met a Koryak named Xoti'to, whose father had come from the Oklan River. His father's brother killed, in a quarrel, a rich and influential Koryak; and his father, in order to prevent the victim's family from taking vengeance, killed the culprit with his own hands. Even after this he did not feel safe, and finally migrated with his family and herds to the Taigonos Peninsula. On the same peninsula I met another fugitive from the Opuka River who had killed his friend, a herdsman. His flight was successful: for the relatives of the victim were poor people, who could not pursue him for a long distance. This murder was not avenged.

The incidents recorded in some of the myths are interesting, in that they show that even in ancient times the old men strove to check the feuds of the younger people. Thus it is told that Big-Raven conceals from his son the fact that their relatives were killed by the neighboring Chukchee, fearing that this revelation might lead to vengeance.¹ The son, having learned of the truth, goes to the neighbors at night, and, finding their elder son asleep, decapitates him. On the following day, the Chukchee come to Big-Raven's house, and say, "You have not taught your son not to kill people. Now come out: we will kill you all." Hearing this, Big-Raven turns to his elder son, and says, "You did not mind me. Go out alone. Let them kill you first, then perhaps they will spare the others."

¹ See Part I, p. 137, No. 6.

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In another myth¹ Big-Raven's elder son, Eme'mqut, bids his younger brother Big-Light to bring back to life a girl of the kamak whom he had killed, that they might live in peace with their neighbors. 628
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A terrible case of blood-revenge is narrated in the district chief's report to the Governor, of Dec. 31, 1882.² An Alutor had killed another while sharing the catch of a seal-hunt. With the help of relatives and friends, the culprit succeeded in taking such elaborate precautions for his personal safety, that the attempts of the hostile group to avenge themselves repeatedly failed. At last the relatives of the victim succeeded, under cover of darkness, in creeping up to the house of the murderer. They barricaded the entrance and set fire to the house. The entire family of the culprit and one strange woman perished in the flames. This cruel procedure was not considered excessive by the Koryak. Only the relatives of the strange woman considered vengeance justifiable, and demanded a ransom.

During wars, the victors would put the children of the vanquished to death to prevent vengeance. In one of the myths cited above, Eme'mqut, having annihilated the warriors of the Chukchee, says to his people, "Let us go to their camp and kill their women and children. If we leave them alive, the sons of the killed men will make war upon us when they grow up."³ 727
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The Koryak are very rancorous, and try to avenge every insult. At the Koryak fair on the Palpal I witnessed a fight which I consider characteristic. On the third day of the fair, reindeer-races and other contests took place. Among the combatants were two young Koryak from the Opuka River, A'inqo and Xata'uc̄ñin. The former was the older and weaker, but succeeded by a clever twist in throwing his adversary. Xata'uc̄ñin soon found himself on top of A'inqo, but the combat was pronounced undecided. In the evening of the same day, Xata'uc̄ñin quietly approached A'inqo and struck him. A fight ensued, in which Xata'uc̄ñin soon gained the upper hand. Nobody interfered. Suddenly A'inqo, whose face was all battered, ceased to defend himself, and squatted down on his heels. Xata'uc̄ñin kept on striking him on the head, while A'inqo sat helplessly, his head drooping, his face covered with blood. Thus the beaten Koryak expresses his submission and pleads for his life. Xata'uc̄ñin raged like a wild beast, and would probably have killed A'inqo but for the interference of the old men. As A'inqo's relatives were expected to arrive at the fair the next day, the old men forced Xata'uc̄ñin to leave the same night in order that further fighting might be avoided. Before Xata'uc̄ñin's departure I invited him to my tent for a glass of tea, and asked him to explain to me the cause of the fight. It appeared that his enmity toward A'inqo was of old standing. When he (Xata'uc̄ñin) was a boy, the elder A'inqo used to beat him. Their fathers, too, had had 627
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¹ See Part I, p. 239.² See Case of the Archives of the Gishig District, 1882, No. 404.³ See Part I, p. 135.